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Gallery and Studio

ANIMAL PAINTING AND PAINTERS.

I.—CATS.

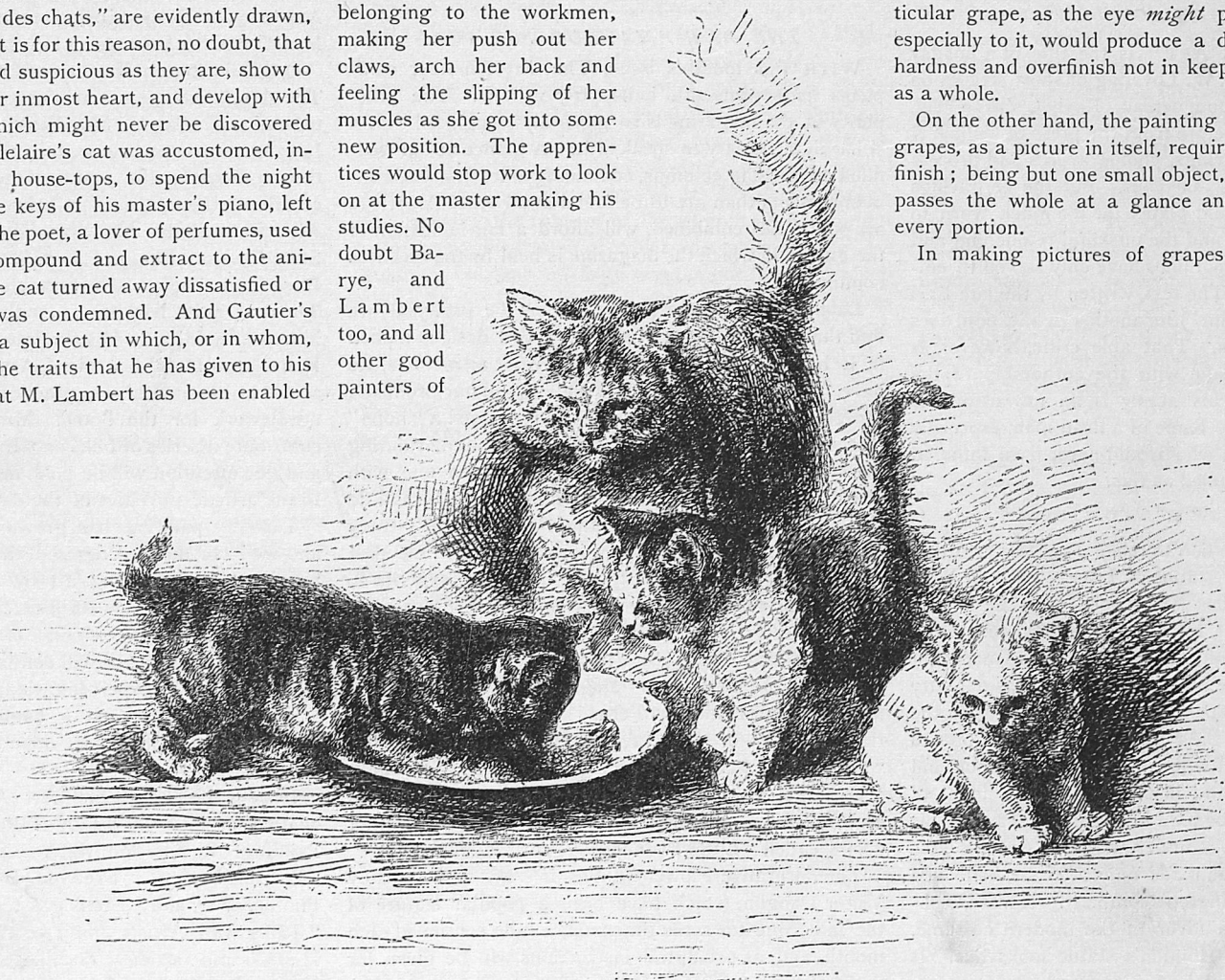


CATS furnish, perhaps, the most charming, but certainly among the most difficult of subjects for the animal painter. Their grace, their attractiveness, are incontestable; but then their airs, their fashions, the undulations of their spine, the expression of their countenance, their very manner of extending their claws and yawning, are hard to seize, and harder still to copy. Full of chic and esprit, of all sorts of subtleties and refinements, the most ferocious at bottom, and superficially the most civilized of brutes, they have never been perfectly painted nor properly characterized in words but by Frenchmen, themselves so like, in many respects, to their pets. Most Frenchmen love cats, whether they like other animals or not; and French painters excel in depicting them, as the reader will readily grant who but glances at the cats and kittens of M. Eugene Lambert, which romp about these columns. Take, for instance, the aristocratic little beast which exalts its tail like a Mugwump, and looks ascant at the reader from the middle of this page. Does not he seem, "bon a croquer?" And then what a happy democratic family is that at the bottom, the elder son head and paws in the dish, and the rest looking on, anxious, but not without hope!

This love of cats, or, rather, this thorough appreciation of their qualities, is no new thing with those of M. Lambert's nationality. Rabelais' "chats-fourrés," it is much to say, show as much observation of cats as of lawyers; and La Fontaine's Rodilard and Ramina-grobis, "le plus diable des chats," are evidently drawn, like his, from the life. It is for this reason, no doubt, that the animals, prudent and suspicious as they are, show to our Gaulish friends their inmost heart, and develop with them characteristics which might never be discovered elsewhere. Thus, Baudelaire's cat was accustomed, instead of rioting on the house-tops, to spend the night gently pacing across the keys of his master's piano, left open on purpose; and the poet, a lover of perfumes, used to submit every new compound and extract to the animal's judgment. If the cat turned away dissatisfied or indifferent, the article was condemned. And Gautier's has served him well as a subject in which, or in whom, he has found many of the traits that he has given to his heroines. It is thus that M. Lambert has been enabled to catch the expression of the cats investigating the wooden shoe on a following page, and to jot down the various attitudes and grimaces of a feline at the toilet. Only one other people, and that of the most remote antiquity, seems to have had an equal regard for cats and as great success in representing them artistically. It is not enough to say that the Egyptians worshipped cats—they understood them. And it was no small part of their wisdom. It is easy to believe the story of their losing a battle rather than risk killing the cats which their enemies had tied to their shields when one sees, in the Metropolitan Museum, the

bronze cats which they have modelled. The very serious-looking cat in the initial letter of this article is probably from a rather rude specimen, for such statuettes of cats were made by the thousand; but it is, at least, interesting as showing the antique type. It is the reserve, the subtlety, the unfathomable and mysterious intelligence of the creature that the Egyptians have embodied in their bronzes. They were sacred animals because of the depth of their deceit. They understood the business of life—to kill and eat—and were therefore worthy of immortality.

Lambert has got something of all this in some of the cats which we reproduce herewith; but, as a rule, he gives himself to reproducing the form and action of kittens still innocent of blood. These he has studied in all imaginable conditions. To draw kittens like this, one must have him. It is a com-matter to learn texture of fur as painter did by It is easy to paint of cats gifted with expression, as done, and our own but to paint a cat that shall be, as one might say, a cat at all points, the painter must win the animal's confidence and deserve it. It is told of Barye—whose paper-weights of cats show as much the genius of the man as his Tuileries lions or his Baltimore figures—that, while for other animals he contented himself with an occasional visit to the Jardin des Plantes, with sketches made in the street and studies of the skeleton and the flayed body, he was always and at every opportunity studying cats, alive and at liberty. It is told of him that in the foundry he would take up and play with a cat belonging to the workmen, making her push out her claws, arch her back and feeling the slipping of her muscles as she got into some new position. The apprentices would stop work to look on at the master making his studies. No doubt Barye, and Lambert too, and all other good painters of

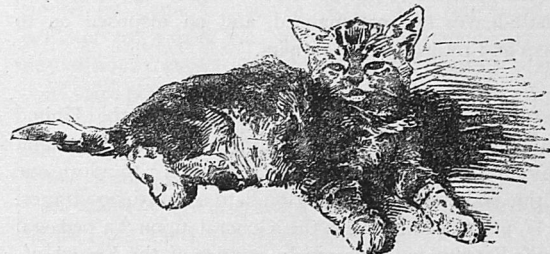


cats—even Cornelius Vischer, who played a trick upon puss and etched her when she had fallen asleep over a sprig of catnip—were fond of their cats. Other animals may be studied by rule and measure; a good picture of a cat must be largely a labor of love.

FRUIT-PAINTING IN OILS.

VI.—GRAPES.

I HAVE reserved for this, my final chapter on fruit-painting, the consideration of the most graceful and



picturesque, and, it seems to me, altogether the most interesting of all fruits. In their abundance, diversity of form, size and color, and widespread growth, grapes offer unparalleled attractions to the fruit-painter. Their treatment varies considerably, according to the species, and also the manner in which they are placed upon the canvas. In some instances, in large compositions, they must be treated with much greater breadth and simplicity than in a picture of a single bunch. The reason for this, which will be readily apprehended by the intelligent amateur is—that, when we regard a group of objects in nature, arranged in a picturesque way, the eye does not analyze or critically examine each particular part, but looks upon the arrangement as a whole, and in order to keep to the truth of nature, the painter must treat those portions which recede from and are subservient to the central point or main object of attraction, in a broader and less defined manner. In the deeper shadows especially, the careful definition of each particular grape, as the eye *might* perceive it if directed especially to it, would produce a disagreeable sense of hardness and overfinish not in keeping with the picture as a whole.

On the other hand, the painting of a single bunch of grapes, as a picture in itself, requires much more minute finish; being but one small object, the eye readily compasses the whole at a glance and intuitively criticises every portion.

In making pictures of grapes my experience has taught me that, in order to insure success with the public generally, they should be represented alone by themselves, or, if in company with other fruit, everything else should occupy such a subordinate position—should be so suppressed—as not to interfere in the least with the importance of the subject-in-chief; otherwise, the interest of the spectator is divided, and what should be paramount loses much of its attraction. Moreover,

I have always found it exceedingly difficult to make a pleasing and interesting picture by combining grapes of various colors—that is, the very light with the very dark species—the contrast being usually too severe to secure a harmoniously united whole. For instance, black

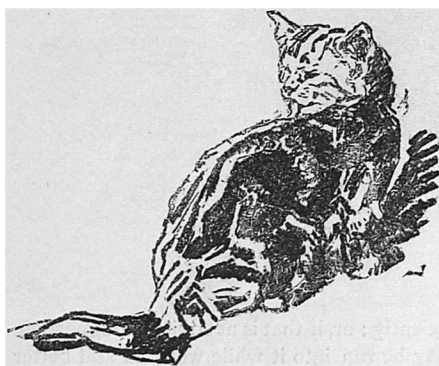
Hamburgs will not go well with Muscats, nor black Damascus with Calabrian raisin, yet the lightest bunches of the Flamme de Tokay will unite harmoniously with



the ripest Muscat or the golden Hamburg. It is better, however, to keep to one variety in a picture.

For the present we will confine our attention to the painting of a single bunch of black Hamburgs. My canvases for this purpose are usually twelve by eighteen and fourteen by twenty inches. I paint sometimes with and sometimes without stems and leaves, and it is hard to say which are the more attractive. Let us select a gracefully tapering bunch, weighing from two to three pounds, not fully ripe, as we desire as much color as we can get. We will hang it against something representing as near as may be an old yellowish white plastered wall, and not farther than three feet from your studio light. It should swing out just so far from the background that the cast shadow may be broad and well defined. It should be almost upon a level with the eye—never below it. Now, with a piece of charcoal, sketch it in, *not* in the manner of the impressionists, but very carefully, drawing every grape in its proper place. After this has been done trace over every line with a fine-pointed sable pencil charged with burnt Sienna or deep lake, correcting and rounding where necessary. Use a very little sugar of lead with the color, as it is a slow dryer. Now paint in the background, taking particular care to keep the shadow transparent and a little warmer in tone than you see it.

I generally use the spatula or palette-knife in laying on the color, as by this process I get a rougher and more wall-like surface. It is necessary, however, to use a brush afterward for the purpose of getting the ground well up to the outline of the bunch, and to touch in here and there a weather stain or broken place in order to relieve the monotony of tone. Lay in the grapes in shadow first, using carmine No. 2 and Vandyck brown in the deepest. As the light is approached, gradually discard the Vandyck brown, and in those grapes completely illuminated, or many of them, you will observe that the shadowed side, or side opposite the light, becomes semi-transparent and of a beautiful light garnet or ruby hue, which can be rendered with vermilion and a little carmine. Upon that portion of the fruit which receives the direct rays of light, the thick bloom with which it is coated makes it appear a light blue gray of various grades. In order to save time, and also to give this il-



luminated side its proper purity, opacity, and breadth, a portion of the canvas approximating to its size and shape had better be left bare when painting in the purples, after which lay on the gray lights, and dexterously lose or blend the edges with the purple. The bloom will assert itself in the deeper shadows as well as in the light, and though at times scarcely perceptible, must be interpreted as near as possible, if complete success is desired.

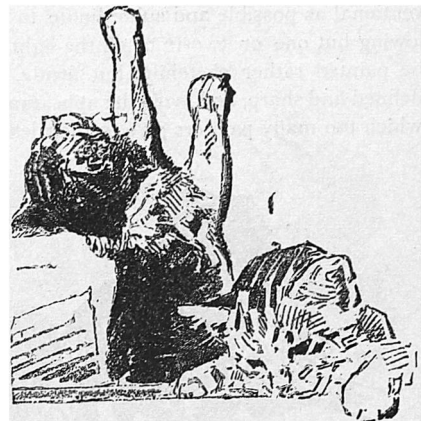
The illustration in color accompanying the present number of The Art Amateur is from a painting of black Hamburg grapes hanging where the sunlight shines upon them through the vines. This effect is a difficult one to interpret. The dazzling light is trying to the eyes, rendering it almost impossible to catch and retain the values throughout. In copying this lithograph or attempting a similar subject from nature, the amateur should follow previous directions in sketching in and outlining in color, carefully indicating only a few of the most prominent leaves. Next paint in the background in one solid tone of the sunniest green, using for that purpose yellow green, vermilion, light cadmium and a little yellow ochre. After this go on with the grapes, painting those in shadow first with madder carmine No. 2, Indian red and Vandyck brown. Take care to indicate, even in the densest shadows, each particular



grape with a delicate tint of warm, dark gray. As you emerge from the shadow—of course all the hues become lighter—gradually discard Vandyck brown and Indian red and add to the carmine a little Chinese vermilion. In the brightest portion, where the direct rays of light strike the berries, use pure Chinese vermilion with a little white added, and for the high lights pure white. After the first painting has "set," glaze the brighter grapes with rose madder and go over the illuminated side or edge of each grape with grays, for the dark grays using ivory black, ultramarine blue and raw umber with *very* little white. Now touch in your leafage and stems over the sunny ground, painting around and beyond the large leaves you have previously sketched out; color them as you see them in the original, using the zinober greens, cadmium—both light and orange—yellow ochre and burnt Sienna. Now paint in the large, near leaves, and your picture *ought* to be finished.

So much for the black Hamburg. Now let us take a look at the lightest and most brilliant of all the purple grapes—the Flamme de Tokay; they are so bright, so full of glowing color, that the term rosy or roseate may be applied to them with propriety. When about half

ripe, or midway in the change from green to red, they arrive at their most beautiful stage. At this period all the hues and tones of the spectrum may be detected in their rich but exquisitely delicate coloring. At this stage also they are more difficult to paint than when they have attained full maturity, on account of the great variety of tint.



This grape may be represented against either a light or a dark ground. If dark, perhaps a very dense olive green would be the best prevailing tone for a bunch where the rosy reds predominate. If the fruit be less ripe, and the cool, pearly greens are in the ascendant, let your background incline to a brown red or burnt Sienna tone. I have painted them against an unpolished mahogany panel with good effect. After all, however, I think the light creamy white ground the best, as the cast shadow can be made so very effective in giving relief to the bunch. It is very difficult to give explicit directions to the amateur just how to proceed in painting this variety of the fruit, on account of the diversity of color. I can only tell what pigments I use, refer him to my remarks in regard to the black Hamburg, and what I shall have to say in reference to the rendition of the light green grapes, and then leave him to his own devices. For the Flamme de Tokay my palette consists of white, light cadmium, deep carmine, French vermilion, burnt Sienna, the zinober greens, cerulean blue, raw umber and rose madder. In the schedule of light green grapes, or, as they are usually called, "white grapes," there is a great variety, the finest in color and most picturesque of which is the Muscat as grown in our own graperies. They grow less compact on the stem and hang in more graceful clusters than the varieties already mentioned.

In painting a bunch of these grapes, my habit has been to use a panel of black walnut, or maroon plush, or velvet drapery as a background. I pose them pretty near the window so as to secure as much interior illumination from the light shining through the grapes as I can.

The method of coloring is the same as in the case of the Hamburgs, except that we use the greens and yellows instead of

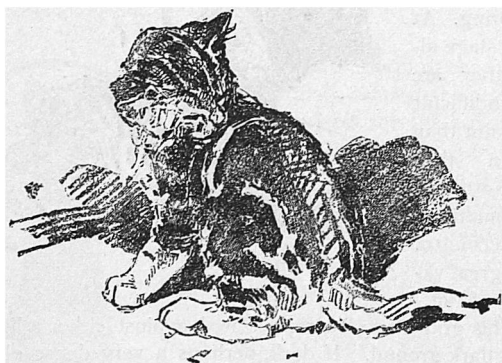
the reds and purples. For those grapes in the deepest shadow use dark zinober green and burnt Sienna. As you gradually approach the light, substitute light zinober for the dark; you will perceive more or less gray bloom on all; this get by the addition of a little white and rose madder. When you reach those grapes which the positive light fairly strikes, you will observe that the illuminated side is almost pure white and the opposite side a brilliant yellow, with the intermediate tones light, warm green; sometimes, where the grape is very ripe, tending to orange. The opaque lights are to be treated as heretofore described. Upon those grapes that catch but a feeble ray, or which are partially hidden by others, reduce your light by the addition of rose madder and more blue or black.

Other kinds of grapes which make attractive pictures



are the following: black Damascus, Gros Colmo de Canto, Prince Albert, Calabrian raisin, Ionia, and Catwba.

In painting leafage and stems, keep them as unconventional as possible and subordinate to the grapes, allowing but one or two to catch the light. They should be painted rather sketchily, but firmly, the edges well defined and sharp, and avoid the appearance of *thickness*, which too many painters give to their leaves.



In leaves for white grapes, endeavor to select those which have changed in color, from age or some other cause, as the russet and brown tones contrast well and picturesquely with the light, tender green of the grapes.

The spaces between leaves should be well crossed with stems, some darker than others, and here and there an end



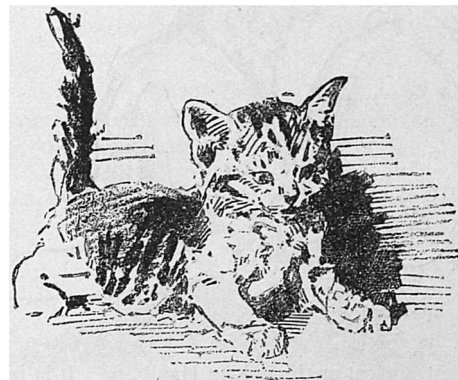
of one projecting directly into the light, catching it sharply, will give much force and realism to the picture. For leaves of purple grapes the various shades of green, from the tenderest yellow to the dark, cool tones, are the best.

There appears to be a sort of prejudice among many artists against the introduction of insect life, drops of

HINTS ON "WET" WATER-COLOR.

IN carefully finished works it is often well after having completed the modelling of the figure and added an indication of its coloring, by the ordinary laborious method, to go over the work again in the wet color, using brighter tones and playing them as much as possible across the direction of the tones first laid. This gives greater body and takes away much of the fatigued look of a carefully wrought water-color drawing. It is also extremely useful in giving softness to the surface of still water, to clouds, to certain stuffs—such as velvet, to hair, and even flesh. In case there is any body of pigment underneath, as there is sure to be in the shadows, the best plan in remodelling is to moisten the whole surface with clear water, then lay in the tints required, each in its place, and with thick pigment, allowing the colors to spread and blend of themselves. In this way the color underneath is disturbed as little as possible. It will often be found when several heavy couches of color have been laid, one over another, that it is possible to regain the lower colors in touches almost as in cameo-cutting, by taking off the upper layers with clear water and a blotting-paper. Or the under colors may be brought to the surface mixed with the upper. This process is very useful in rich shadows, such as those of hair or of foliage, in which the darker shades are relieved by all sorts of reflections and translucencies. But, when touches of this sort, occurring in masses whether of light or shadow, of a different color, are required to have definite form, it is better to use a more manageable method. In that case the best plan is to lay in, with a fine pointed brush, the exact shape required with clear water. Then taking up the proper color, thick, it is introduced again with the point of the brush, and allowed to dissolve into the spot of water. If a light color is to be laid in this way in the middle of a dark space, an opaque pigment, such as yellow ochre for yellow, Indian red or vermilion for red, French ultramarine for blue, and Veronese green for green, should be used if possible. Transparent colors may be mixed with white or with Naples yellow, if the resulting tint will answer. If not, and if some transparent color, like rose madder, must be used, it will be necessary, after allowing the drop of water to stand for a moment or two, to take it up with the blotter; much of the underlying color will come with it, and the rest may be removed by rubbing the place quickly with a clean linen rag. The required light tone can then be laid and will show as transparent and as pale as need be. Points or touches of brilliant light, as in jewels, water, the eyes of animals, may be taken out with the point or edge of a penknife. The edge passed lightly over a rather rough paper will

the like. It is more frequently employed to take out large spaces of work that is not satisfactory. For this purpose the space is first moistened evenly with the sponge dipped in water, then the wet color is rubbed toward the centre of the space, and finally is taken up by the sponge, from which all the moisture is previously expelled. The space thus cleared of color can then be



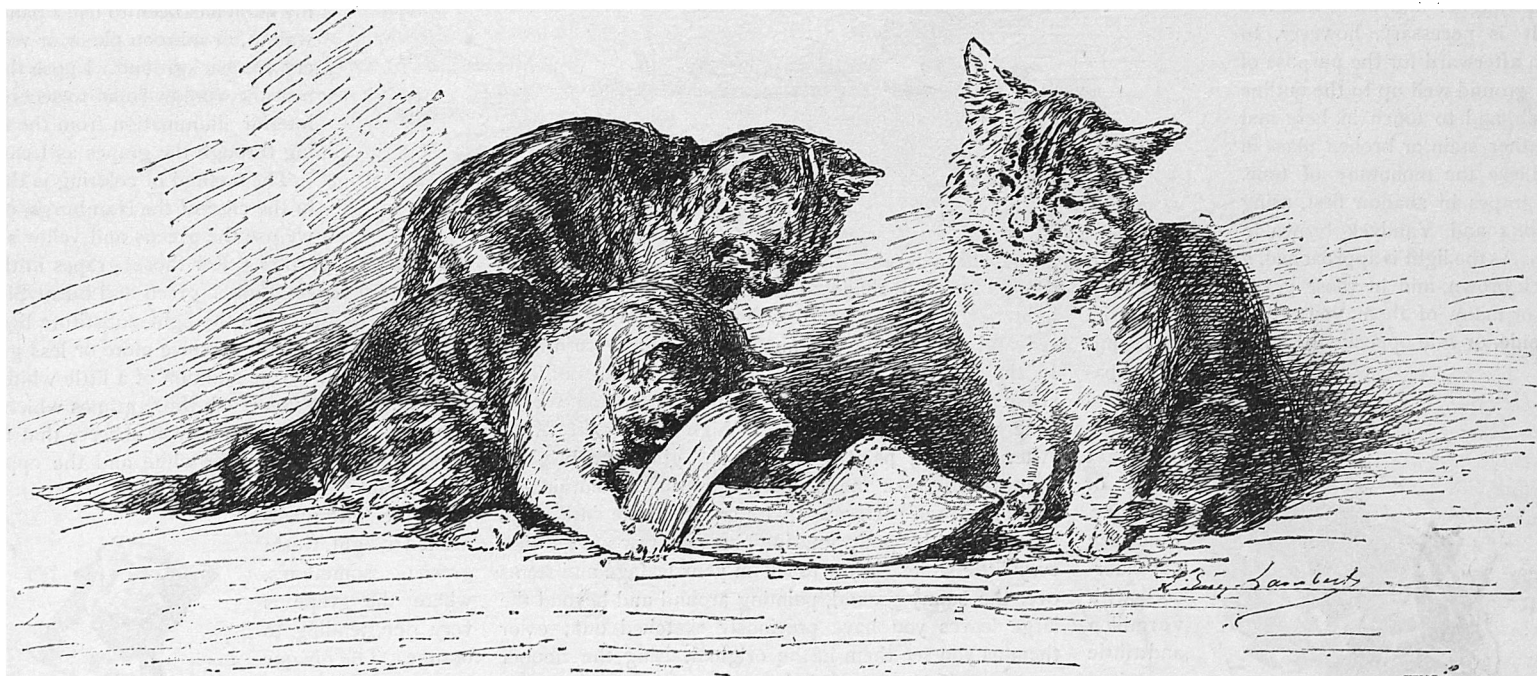
worked over again, but it must be understood that the tones on a space so cleared will look heavy and opaque.

With these means, in addition to the simple wash and brush line, water-color may be made one of the most direct methods of working from nature.

The principal lines only of the model are indicated with the pencil, and the local tones are immediately passed over the paper in their proper places and so that their edges will complete the drawing purposely left unfinished. The shadows are then added while the local colors are still moist, which obviates all hardness. A few half-tints may be introduced between light and shadow



in the same manner, and then there is nothing left but to add whatever vigorous touches and dark markings may be required and to take out high lights with the blotter or the penknife. In this way of working, a conventional, shadow color is often used composed of yellow ochre, brown madder and cobalt, the local tone being held to



water, or other extraneous matter, into still-life subjects, for which, in my judgment, there is no legitimate foundation; on the contrary, instead of detracting from the picture as a whole, such accessories, if naturally and skilfully done, give it interest and expression. Of course they must not be too prominently displayed so that the eye catches them at the first glance. A. J. H. WAY.

give an effect of gray bloom or mist, often useful in landscape and in the reflections of some stuffs. With a little more pressure, the glitter of rough water, or of leaves turned up by the wind, and several other effects of the sort, may be imitated.

The sponge may be used as a rude sort of brush for painting backgrounds, hair, large folds of drapery, and

modify it sufficiently; or, if that is not quite enough, some other color may be run into it while wet. A still better practice, but more difficult to succeed in without viva voce instruction, is to place local tones (over the lights only), half-tints and shadows, each in its place and of the proper value, at once, the work when done having a rather rough, but very attractive, mosaic-like appearance.